

VA Tech applies antimicrobial to all fields

The synthetic turf fields, sports medicine training room, locker rooms, whirlpools and wrestling rooms of Virginia Tech Athletics have been treated with the colorless, odorless Sports Antimicrobial System (SAS). Virginia Tech is the first Division I university to apply the antimicrobial to its athletics facilities.

The product creates a long-lasting antimicrobial layer effective against a very broad spectrum of all known bacteria, mold, fungi and algae, says the manufacturer.

"With bacterial staph infections like MRSA and fungi like ring worm and mold affecting many student-athletes across the country, the need to protect your facilities has become a necessity. We were not going to wait until we had a problem," said Jim Weaver, athletics director at Virginia Tech.

Hokies' sports turf and athletic grounds manager Casey Underwood told *SportsTurf* the concern of MRSA outbreaks at some other institutions this year brought about the treatments. "The company handled all applications. The artificial turf was sprayed with a three-point mounted rig," said Underwood. "I can't see it or feel it."

The TurfAide Platinum program comes with an 8-year extended warranty. Included in the package, CSG will make annual service checks to ensure the antimicrobial layer remains active and retreat as needed, according to the manufacturer, SportCoatings.

"Unlike conventional disinfectants that wash away and dissipate quickly, SAS durably bonds to the surface, actively fighting microorganisms 24/7," said SportCoatings president Art McWood.

SAS is comprised of three products: TurfAide provides antimicrobial protection to synthetic turf systems; SportsAide protects athletic



facilities including training rooms, locker rooms, whirlpools, gym mats and exercise equipment; and SportsAide Fabric Conditioner provides antimicrobial protection, stain releasers and odor control to sports laundry.

"Using the SAS system is like having an airbag in your car," said Mike Goforth, Director of Athletics Training, "you may not be able to see it, but the parents of our athletes can feel confident knowing that their sons and daughters are training in safe facilities when they come to Virginia Tech."

"You could tell it worked quickly. Within 24-hours of the application it erased the typical locker room scent. It brought a noticeable freshness to our facilities" said Denie Marie, facilities manager of Rector Field House.

The nano-technology powering SAS is the ÆGIS Microbe Shield that has been safely used in consumer goods ranging from shoes to diapers surgical dressings for more than 30 years. Registered with the EPA, it imparts an invisible layer of antimicrobial protection that will not leach any chemicals or heavy metals into the environment and will not rub off onto a player's skin.

"What makes the ÆGIS Microbe Shield unique is that it functions through a physical mode-of-action versus the chemical poisoning associated with traditional antimicrobials," said Curtis White, Chairman and CEO of ÆGIS. "This physical mode-of-action prevents microbes from adapting to the shield so there is no ability for 'super bugs' to develop resistance."

Extensive warranties and service agreements are available on SAS applications to ensure the active antimicrobial layer remains intact. ■

